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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; PRM FOR PRM/ANE; NSC FOR
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL ORDERS FOR DEMOLITION OF BEDOUIN
STRUCTURES

REF: JERUSALEM 1712

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary. According to UNRWA, COGAT officers delivered demolition orders for 38 structures at the Milehat-Ka'abneh bedouin encampment in area C on September ¶22. Bedouin resident in the area told Poloff they have been living seasonally in this location since 1985 and expressed concern that more than 60 residents will be displaced within days. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) According to UNRWA, seven families, numbering 60 to 70 people from the Milehat family / Ka'abneh tribe, received notice September 22 from COGAT of planned demolitions at their summer encampment in area C. The order gave residents 12 days, until October 4, to remove the structures. On October 2, Poloff visited the encampment, which is located due-east of Ma'ale Mikhmas settlement along route 448 and abuts a closed military zone in the Jordan Valley. The site is approximately four kilometers southwest of the bedouin encampment demolished September 9 (reftel). Residents told Poloff that an IDF jeep and civil administration vehicle returned the morning of October 2 and surveyed the site using binoculars for 15 to 20 minutes.

Families Assert Longstanding Seasonal Presence

¶3. (C) Bedouin family head Mohammed Suleiman Musa Milehat told Poloff on October 2 that the seven families had gradually migrated north from Hebron beginning in 1948. Milehat said in 1985 the IDF relocated the families and built a permanent one-room schoolhouse for the families' use at this location. UNRWA field staff estimate that 38 structures, including eight residential structures and 20 animal pens, could be demolished. The school is not among the buildings to be demolished. Milehat said that, when he told the IDF the families had lived at that site every summer since 1985, the soldier dismissed his argument, saying, "I haven't seen you here."

¶4. (C) Milehat told Poloff that unemployment in the community is 100% and they subsist on a small income from raising livestock. He said that they have moved most of the livestock out of the encampment after receiving the demolition orders because they fear the IDF will confiscate the animals during the demolition. (Note: UNRWA staff report that this has become standard IDF practice during demolitions. End note.) He said they cannot afford the 15,000 shekels (\$4,400) to pay a lawyer to contest the demolition orders. Milehat said his options are limited and requested USG assistance in paying for an attorney. "I don't want clothes or bread. I want to keep a house for my kids and I need a lawyer to do that," he said. He was not hopeful the Palestinian Authority would assist.

Comment

15. (C) These recent actions suggest the GOI does not view demolitions of bedouin structures as a violation of its commitments to the USG on this issue. With the expiration of the October 4 deadline the demolitions could take place at any time.

WALLES